provides limited funding that will permit the Secretary of Transportation to initiate a new Fair Competitive Bid Procedure that the States can utilize. The Secretary will then monitor the progress of this demonstration and make monthly reports to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

I believe this is an excellent idea and was considering offering a similar amendment to this bill. However, I do not wish to delay the proceeding today, and this is already an item to be considered in conference.

I would like to know if the chairman has an opinion on the House State-assisted intercity rail service provision.

Mr. SHELBY. I share my colleague's support of a procedure that will encourage the States to initiate passenger service through a competitive bid process. I believe it is important that Congress examine whether a competitive process can preserve and expand intercity rail passenger service at reasonable prices. I pledge to the Senator from Kansas that I will work with the House conferees to pursue a provision that would introduce a uniform procedure to allow the States the option of providing competitive rail passenger service.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I thank the distinguished chairman and look forward to working with him on a fair bid proposal.

BORDER CROSSING

Ms. COLLINS. I would like to thank the managers of the bill for their leadership on this important legislation, and I greatly appreciate their efforts to improve our Nation's transportation infrastructure.

Mr. SHELBY. I appreciate the Senator's support, and I thank her for her leadership.

Ms. COLLINS. I would like to make my colleagues aware of a project of great importance, not just to my constituents in Maine, but to the rest of the country as well. The existing border crossing connecting Calais, ME to St. Stephen, New Brunswick is heavily congested and therefore causes significant traffic delays and creates serious security concerns for U.S. and Canadian travelers and cross-border commerce. The current crossing is the eighth busiest commercial crossing on the Canadian border and has seen truck traffic double over the last 10 years. Since 199 the Maine Department of Transportation, along with the Federal Highway Administration and the General Services Administration, has engaged in a comprehensive National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, process to determine the location for a new, modern, efficient border crossing. As part of the overall project, the General Services Administration is responsible for designing and constructing a new border station. The Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency, CCRA, will be responsible for the design and construction of the border station on the Canadian side of the river. The Maine Department of Transportation and New Brunswick Department of Transportation, and the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency have funding in place for their portions of the design. Therefore, it is crucial that funding for the GSA portion of the project be appropriated so that design and construction work can begin as soon as possible. I would ask that the Senator from Alabama work with me to ensure that this project moves forward as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. SHELBY. I acknowledge the Senator's request, and I pledge to work with her on this matter.

TERRORIST FIREARMS DETECTION ACT OF 2003

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I express my support for the Terrorist Firearms Detection Act, a bill introduced earlier this week by Senator KENNEDY. Originally passed in 1988, and sometimes called the ''plastic gun'' law, this Federal law makes it illegal for any person to manufacture, import, ship, deliver, possess, transfer or receive any firearm that is not detectable by walk-through metal detectors or the type of x-ray machines commonly used at airports.

Since September 11, 2001, the Congress has worked hard to improve the security of our borders, airports, government buildings, and communities. However, in just over 2 months, on December 10, this essential common sense gun safety legislation is set to expire. The Terrorist Firearms Detection Act would permanently reauthorize the plastic gun law. Plastic guns, whose production has been endorsed by the National Rifle Association, should only be used by our military and intelligence agencies and must never find their way back into our communities.

This legislation has the support of every major gun safety organization in the country, including the Brady Campaign to Prevent Violence United with the Million Mom March, Americans for Gun Safety, and the Violence Policy Center.

The overwhelming majority of my colleagues would agree that plastic guns pose a clear and present danger to our nation's aviation security, as well as governmental targets across the country. In fact, Pete Shields, the former president of Handgun Control, the predecessor organization to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Violence, said it well in testimony before the House Judiciary Committee in 1988.

> Weapons which evade security devices put us all at risk. Every airport, every courthouse, every public building which relies on screening devices for security will no longer be safe. At a time when our Nation is committing vast resources and energies to stopping terrorism and protecting our citizens abroad, we should not even consider making it easier for terrorists to operate in our own country.

I urge my colleagues in the Congress to act quickly to enact this legislation, and I also hope that President Bush will soon sign this important gun safety legislation into law.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

Earlier this month, two men were slain in Stevens County, Washington. Russell Charles Markvardsen, 52, and Matthew Lee Raynor, 32, were shot to death at close range with a shotgun in their cabin in the Onion Creek area. The two men previously lived in a log home that was destroyed in a May 2002 fire that authorities investigated as a possible arson. At the time, the men told the Spokesman-Review newspaper in Spokane that they suspected arson because of possible prejudice against their homosexuality.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

WORLD POPULATION AND WATER SCARCITY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the week of October 20–25 has been designated as World Population Awareness Week with the theme of ''Water: Our Most Precious Natural Resource.''

Because the world's 6 billion people are dependent on 1 percent of all the water on Earth, many fear a future where water scarcity will undermine political growth and lead to political and social unrest. Over the next 20 years the world's population is projected to increase to 7.2 billion, yet the average water supply is expected to drop by one-third in that same time period. World population is expected to balloon to 9 billion before leveling off.

Despite the looming future of water scarcity, consumption is increasing. The world's population has tripled in the past 100 years, but water use by humans has multiplied six times. Without a global commitment to sustainable water management, the world will see a large majority of its population living in areas where basic water requirements for drinking, cooking, or sanitation will be difficult or impossible to meet.

Acting on the global consensus that water scarcity must be a top development priority, the Population Institute has decided to dedicate the 19th World